

Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-10

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 RSC-01 SS-20 SSO-00 ISO-00 EUR-25

CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07

H-03 L-03 NSC-10 PA-04 PRS-01 SPC-03 SAM-01 LAB-06

EB-11 OMB-01 /107 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE

USINT CAIRO FLASH FLASH

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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TAGS: PFOR, UK SUBJ: BRITISH ELECTIONS

ON THE BASIS OF INCOMPLETE RETURNS AND COMPUTER PROJECTIONS

OUR PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE LABOR PARTY WILL
WIN A PLURALITY BUT WILL HAVE TO DEPEND ON THE SUPPORT OF
THE LIBERALS FOR THE PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION. AS OF 2400 EDT
FEBRUARY 28, LABOR HAD WON 253 SEATS, THE CONSERVATIVES
176, AND THE LIBERALS 5. COMPUTER PROJECTIONS INDICATE
THAT THE FIRST TALLY WILL PROBABLY BE ON THE ORDER OF
LABOR 308, CONSERVATIVES 297, AND LIBERALS 14 WITH MINOR
PARTIES ACCOUNTING FOR THE REMAINING 16 SEATS. HEATH,
WILSON, THORPE, AND ALL OTHER FRONT BENCHERS WON THEIR
SEATS.

LACK OF ABSOLUTE MAJORITY FOR ANY PARTY POINTS TO SOME DAYS
OF JOCKEYING WHILE LABOR AND LIBERALS SEEK TO WORK OUT
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UNDERSTANDING THAT WILL ENSURE WILSON MAJORITY SUPPORT IN

COMMONS. ALTHOUGH THORPE HAS SAID THAT HE IS KEEPING HIS OPTION OPEN ON QUESTION OF FORMAL COALITION WITH LABOR, THIS DEVELOPMENT IS MOST UNLIKELY.

LABOR DEPENDENCE ON LIBERAL SUPPORT IN COMMONS MILITATES AGAINST LABOR'S MAKING EXTREMIST MOVES IN EITHER FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC POLICY UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION, WHICH NO PARTY, BUT ESPECIALLY THE LIBERALS, WILL WANT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. NATURE OF DEAL BETWEEN THORPE AND WILSON WILL PROBABLY INVOLVE LABOR ACQUIESCENCE, AT LIBERAL URGING, IN STATUS

QUO IN FOREIGN POLICY (INCLUDING MAINTENANCE OF PRESENT POSITIONS IN NATO AND ON US-UK DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS). QUID PRO QUO WILL BE LIBERAL SUPPORT FOR MUCH OF LABOR'S DOMESTIC PROGRAM, EXCEPT FOR NATIONALIZATION OF INDUSTRIES (OTHER THAN NORTH SEA OIL). THIS DOES NOT EXCLUDE EITHER MINOR SHIFTS AND NUANCES OF CHANGE ON SOME INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS (SUCH AS SLIGHTLY MORE FAVORABLE LINE ON MBFR AND DETENTE) OR POSSIBLE REDUCTIONS IN DEFENSE BUDGET, AS BRITAIN FOCUSES BULK OF ENERGIES ON OVERWHELMING ECONOMIC ISSUES AT HOME.

SCENARIO ON BRITAIN'S COMMON MARKET MEMBERSHIP WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO SORT OUT. LIBERALS WILL NOT OPPOSE WILSON ATTEMPT TO "RENEGOTIATE" MORE FAVORABLE TERMS. HOWEVER, LABOR'S DEPENDENCE ON LIBERALS ALL BUT GUARANTEES THAT UK WILL END UP CONTINUING IN EC, WITH PERHAPS SOME COSMETIC "IMPROVEMENTS", PROBABLY PAID FOR BY GERMANS, SUCH AS RESPECTABLE EC REGIONAL FUND ALLOCATIONS FOR DEPRESSED PARTS OF BRITAIN.

WISH TO STRESS AGAIN THAT FOREGOING ANALYSIS IS BASED ON COMPUTER PROJECTION OF RESPECTABLE LABOR PLURALITY OVER CONSERVATIVES. IF FINAL RESULTS NARROW THE GAP, TORIES MAY START MANEUVERS TO RETAIN PRIME MINISTERSHIP, AND THIS MIGHT COMPLICATE DECISION FOR LIBERALS.
CASEY

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